

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 /073 W

-----006573 021557Z /53

O 021400Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4410

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0833

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS SHUM, PGOV, PINT, MASS, AR

SUBJECT AMBASSADORS CALL ON MASSERA

1. AMBASSADOR PAID A HALF HOUR CALL ON ADMIRAL MASSERA AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 1, RESPONDING TO URGENT TELEPHONE CALL EARLY THE SAME MORNING INVITING HIM TO "STROP AROUND FOR A DRINK." (THAT PART OF THE INVITATION GOT SIDE TRACKED. NOTHING WAS SERVED DURING THE INTERVIEW, WHICH TOOK PLACE AT MASSERAS OFFICE AT NAVAL HEADQUARTERS.)

2. EQUIPMENT FOR THE NAVY. THE ADMIRAL EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN THAT BOTH THE ARGENTINE ARMY AND AIR FORCE HAD RECENTLY BEEN AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE SPARE PARTS AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES, WHILE THE NAVY HAS RECEIVED NOTHING. MASSERA SAID THAT HE HAD UPBRAIDED AMBASSADOR AJA ESPIL ABOUT THIS AND GOTTEN THE ANSWER THAT THE ARGENTINE NAVY IS UNPOPULAR WITH THE US GOVERNMENT. "THEY SAY IN WASHINGTON WE HAVE THE NUNS," MASSERA SAID. "YOU KNOW THATS JUST NOT SO," HE CONTINUED. "WELL ITS ALRIGHT
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FOR THE US NOT TO LIKE MASSERA," THE ADMIRAL ADDED, "BUT YOU SHOULD HOLD NOTHING ABAINST THE ARGENTINE NAVY."

3. HUMAN RIGHTS CASES. THE AMBASSADOR TOOK THE OCCASION TO RAISE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS. HE RAISED SPECIFICALLY THE TIMERMAN, DEUTSCH AND VOGLER CASES. ON TIMERMAN MASSERA GAVE HIS EXPECTED RESPONSE: HE HAD TRIED FOR

TIMERMANS RELEASE, HE SAID, BUT HAD BEEN OVERRULED BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMY. HE SEEMED GENUINELY UNAWARE OF THE DEUTSCH AND VOGLER MATTERS, MAKING NOTES AND ASKING PARTICULARS. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD ATTEND A JUNTA MEETING ONLY A HALF HOUR LATER, AND THAT HE WOULD RAISE THESE NAMES WHILE THERE. (COMMENT: ON BEING TOLD THAT ALEJANDRO AND LILIANA DEUTSCH WERE BEING HELD IN CORDOBA, MASSERA MUSED THAT THIS WAS REALLY TOO BAD. IF THEY WERENT IN THE HANDS OF GENERAL MENENDEZ, HE SAID, HE JUST MIGHT BE ABLE TO SNATCH THE PAIR OF THEM AWAY FOR US.)

4. THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE. MASSERA SAID THAT HE HAD READ KAREN DE YOUNGS JANUARY 27 POST ARTICLE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE AND VIDELA OFTEN DISAGREE, AND SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER TRIED TO DISGUISE THIS. HE HAD BEEN FRANK WITH MANY PEOPLE ABOUT THIS. NOW THAT THE DE YOUNG ARTICLE IS CAUSING A STIR, HE SAID, THE TIME HAS COME TO AIR HIS GRIEVANCES AND HAVE CANDID WORDS WITH HIS ARMY COLLEAGUE.

5. ATMOSPHERICS. MORE INTERESTING THAN WHAT MASSERA SAID AT THE MEETING --WHICH SEEMS ALMOST TRIVIAL WHEN COMPARED WITH URGENCY WITH WHICH THE MEETING WAS ARRANGED--WAS THE PUBLICITY GIVEN IT. FIRST NOTICE THAT THE AMBASSADOR WOULD SEE THE NAVY COMMANDER CAME
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DURING A 1030 RADIO NEWS BROADCAST. (THE APPOINTMENT WAS SET 0900.) AFTERNOON PAPERS CARRIED THE EVENT--AT ABOUT THE TIME IT WAS TAKING PLACE.

6. WE ACCOUNT FOR THIS BY SUGGESTING THAT MASSERA WANTED IT PUBLICIZED HE WAS MEETING WITH THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN ORDER TO THROW HIS ARMY "OPPOSITION" OFF BASE. WE WERE TOLD ON JANUARY 31 BY A RANKING CIVILIAN OFFICER OF THE PRESIDENCY THAT VIDELA WAS FED UP WITH MASSERAS POLITICKING AND APPARENT DISLOYALTY, AND WOULD USE THE DE YOUNG STORY TO "HAVE IT OUT WITH HIM" AT A JUNTA MEETING DUE TO TAKE PLACE LATE AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 1. THE MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR WAS, IN EFFECT, A MASSERA "HOLE CARD" FOR THE TOUGH CONVERSATION WITH VIDELA HE PROBABLY EXPECTED.

7. ON LEAVING MASSERAS OFFICE AMBASSADOR ENCOUNTERED FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES, WHICH GAVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO LAY OUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS CASE CONCERNS HE HAD JUST GIVEN MASSERA. MONTES PROMISED TO GO OVER THESE AGAIN WITH HIS BOSS.

8. AMBASSADOR IS WAITING FOR GREEN LIGHT FROM FONOFF
TO MEET WITH MINISTER INTERIOR HARGUINDEGUY AND
GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES GENERAL ST JEAN.
MEETINGS ARE EXPECTED TO OCCUR EARLY NEXT WEEK AND
AGAIN DEUTSCH, TIMERMAN AND VOGLER CASES WILL BE
DISCUSSED.
CASTRO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY EQUIPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, AMBASSADORS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BUENOS00833
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780050-0318
Format: TEL
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802102/aaaadipr.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 12746dcd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3434382
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADORS CALL ON MASSERA
TAGS: SHUM, PGOV, PINT, MASS, AR, US, (MASSERA PADULA, EMILIO EDUARTE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/12746dcd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014